



File Code: 1950
Date: December 30, 2019

Dear Interested Party

The Lakewood-Laona Ranger District of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (CNNF) is proposing actions in order to address the damage that occurred from the windstorm that struck July 19, 2019, in a manner that will protect human communities and restore the affected areas to a productive forest. The 2019 Blowdown Project proposes to salvage trees damaged in the storm and reduce hazardous fuel loading in areas damaged by the storm. Information on this project is available at: http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=56538

This comment period starts the day after the publication in the *Northwoods River News* and ends after 30 days. A previous scoping notice was issued on August 7, 2019. Since that time, the Forest has elected to propose an Emergency Situation Determination (ESD) from the Chief of the Forest Service which, if granted, could expedite the actions proposed in this project. This ESD would enable the capture the commercial value of downed timber, facilitate expedited reduction of forest fire and tree disease risk, and expedite the restoration of safe public access. If granted, an ESD would waive the pre-decisional objection process under the National Environmental Policy Act, allowing expedited implementation of the proposed activities.

Forest Service regulations define an emergency situation as “a situation on National Forest System (NFS) lands for which immediate implementation of a decision is necessary to achieve one or more of the following: Relief from hazards threatening human health and safety; mitigation of threats to natural resources on NFS or adjacent lands; avoiding a loss of commodity value sufficient to jeopardize the agency’s ability to accomplish project objectives directly related to resource protection or restoration” (36 Code of Federal Regulations 218.21(b)). All of these criteria are applicable to this project.

The CNNF is requesting information, comments, and other assistance from Federal, State, and local agencies, tribes, landowners, and other individuals or organizations that have an interest in or could be affected by the proposed action. Specific comments are the most useful for the identification of issues and development and analysis of alternatives to the proposal.

All persons who provide comments in response to this request will continue to receive information about this project and will be included in any additional public participation effort that may occur (however no additional participation is expected at this time). Those who do not respond will not receive additional information.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on these proposed actions and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and



considered; however, anonymous comments will not provide the agency with the ability to provide the respondent with subsequent environmental documents or standing for administrative review.

The Responsible Official is Mike Brown, District Ranger for the Lakewood-Laona Ranger District of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest. Submit written comments to Mike Brown, District Ranger, by one of the following methods; hand delivery or mail: 15085 State Rd 32, Lakewood, WI 54138; or email the Project Leader, Matthew St. Pierre at matthew.stpierre@usda.gov (please put "2019 Blowdown Project" in the subject line).

To electronically comment go to the website above. At the right will be a "comment" button. Our system will accept email, rtf, and MS-Word formats.

Under our system you can self-subscribe to any project listed in the website above. Projects with mailing list created have a "subscribe to e-mail updates" button on the right side of the project page. Subscribing means that you will automatically get any emails on any documents that are on our website for that project. You can un-subscribe at any time.

You can also send comments through this system any time the project is open. This button (comment on this project) is also on the right side of the project page. It is each individual's responsibility to self-subscribe to any project they want to know about.

Pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27 (d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under the FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The CNNF will inform the requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality, and where the request is denied; the agency will return the submission and notify the requester that the comments may be resubmitted with name and address within 10 days.

Questions or additional information requests regarding this action can be directed to Matthew St. Pierre at 715-362-1385, email: matthew.stpierre@usda.gov

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Brown". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

MICHAEL BROWN
District Ranger

Enclosure (2)
CC: Matt St. Pierre, Marilee Houtler